

Africa and the Atlantic Slave Trade

Prepare to Read

Objectives

In this section you will

1. Understand that the slave trade that began with the exploration of Africa and the colonization of South America and Central America also spread to North America.
2. Discover what the triangular trade was and how it expanded with the growth of the European colonization of North America.

Taking Notes

As you read this section, look for information about the growth of slavery in the Americas. Copy the graphic organizer below, and record your findings in it.

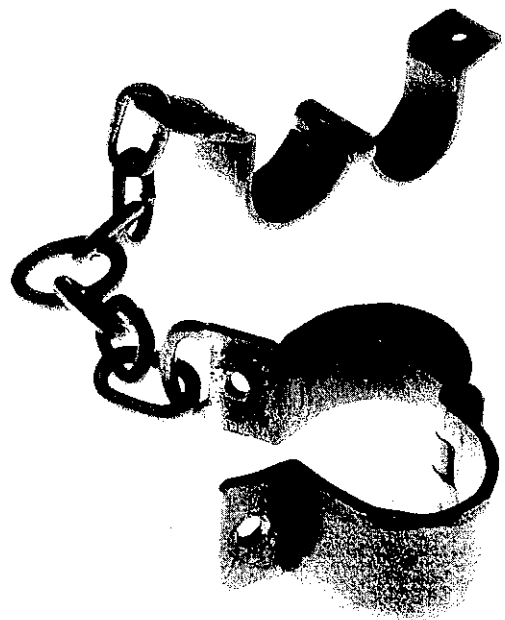
Slavery in the Americas	
South America	North America
• Developed when population of Native Americans declined •	• •

Target Reading Skill

Identify Main Ideas To remember information, good readers identify main ideas as they read. The most important point in a paragraph or section is the main idea. As you read, identify the main idea stated in each section.

Key Terms

- **enslaved** (en SLAYVD), v. made into a slave and treated as property
- **import** (im PAWRT), v. to bring in goods from a foreign country



Leg shackles worn by enslaved Africans

The journey of the enslaved African was a living nightmare. One day he or she was living as a free person in an African village. The next, he or she was captured by slave traders, placed in chains, and forced to march for days. At the end of the march was the slave trading fort and a dungeon where captured Africans might sit for weeks or months. Eventually, people would be brought from the dungeon and then loaded onto a ship. A couple of months later, those who survived the voyage would arrive in the Americas. This destination was the end of the journey—but the beginning of a lifetime of slavery.

This bitter story is one that could have been told by millions of Africans from the 1500s to the 1800s. During those centuries, trade in human beings from Africa thrived. This trade helped enrich traders in Europe, Africa, and the Americas. It provided much of the labor that built European colonies in the Americas. It also changed the cultures of the Americas, as Africans brought with them their traditions and values, which helped them endure enslavement.

Slavery in the Americas

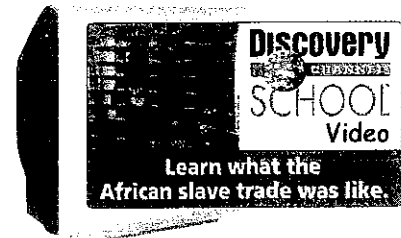
In Chapter 16, you read about the Portuguese explorations under the leadership of Prince Henry the Navigator. In the 1400s, Portugal had explored the western coast of Africa. During that time, Portugal began capturing and trading enslaved human beings in Africa. Enslaved people held as the property of another person and denied basic human rights.

You have also read how the Spanish used enslaved Africans in their American colonies. The Spanish turned to this source of labor as vast numbers of Native Americans died from European diseases for which they had no immunity. The Portuguese also imported large numbers of enslaved Africans to Brazil. To learn more about the impact of slavery in this country, look at the video.

The growing English colonies in North America also relied on enslaved Africans. This dependence on slaves was especially true in the southern regions, where climate and soil conditions favored crops such as tobacco and sugar. The raising of these crops required cheap labor if profits were to be made.

European colonists preferred enslaved Africans to other sources of labor. Africans came from very different cultures and were usually not Christian. This may have made it easier for the colonists to excuse their enslavement of human beings.

✓ **Reading Check** Which European country began the European trade in African slaves?



Identify Main Ideas

Look at the third paragraph on this page. Which sentence represents the main idea of this paragraph?

Slavery

This drawing of a tobacco plantation was made by a European who lived at the time of slavery. Analyze Images What attitude do you think the artist had about slavery?



The Triangular Trade

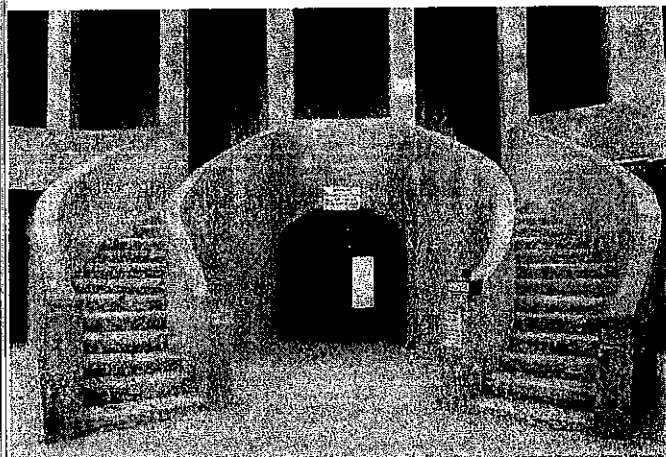
The trade in enslaved Africans was part of a larger trade pattern called the triangular trade, so called because it had three "sides." The first corner of the triangle was in Europe, where ships were loaded with manufactured goods. These goods were shipped to Africa, the second point on the triangle. Here Europeans traded the manufactured goods for enslaved Africans. Slave traders then sent the slaves to the Americas, the third point of the triangle. In the Americas, enslaved Africans were traded for raw materials, which were then shipped back to Europe for manufacturing, completing the triangle.

The journey of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean was known as the Middle Passage. Wrote one British critic, "Never can so much misery be found condensed in so small a place as in a slave ship during

the Middle Passage." The ships were extremely crowded. Death rates on the voyage may have averaged as much as 20 percent.

Slavery became critical to the economic stability of several American colonies. In the 1600s and 1700s, it formed an important part of trade between Europe and the American colonies.

✓ **Reading Check** What was the triangular trade?



In the Goree Island "slave house" near Dakar, slave dealers had comfortable upstairs apartments while slaves were housed in overcrowded cells below. The door in the center was sometimes called "the door of no return" because slaves had to pass through it to go to the slave ships.



Section 4 Assessment

Key Terms

Review the key terms at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.



Target Reading Skill

Identify the main idea in each heading in this section.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Identify** In which century did Europeans begin trading in African slaves?

(b) **Identify Cause and Effect** What event helped lead the

Spanish turn to enslaved labor in their American colonies?

2. (a) **Identify** In what part of the English colonies was slavery most common?

(b) **Draw Inferences** Why do you think slavery was less common in the other colonies?

3. (a) **Define** What was the Middle Passage?

(b) **Summarize** Why did the Spanish turn to enslaved Africans as a source of labor for their American colonies?

Writing Activity

You are an enslaved African, waiting for shipment to the Americas from the dungeon of a coastal African trading fort. Write a journal entry about your feelings. Be sure to discuss what has happened to you and your thoughts about what the future may hold.

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